



**2016-2017 Request for Nebraska  
AmeriCorps\*State  
Request for Grant Applications  
ATTACHMENTS**



**ISSUED: March 11, 2016  
DEADLINE: April 26, 2016 - 5:00 pm CST**

State Capitol, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor West  
P.O. Box 98927  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509--8927  
Phone: 402-471-6225  
[www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov)

**CFDA Number: 94.006**

## **FAQS**

### **What is ServeNebraska?**

ServeNebraska is a state agency dedicated to promoting the spirit of volunteerism throughout Nebraska by providing service opportunities that enable Nebraskans of all ages to strengthen their communities. We identify and mobilize resources, promote an ethic of service, and empower communities to solve problems and improve the quality of life for individuals and families. ServeNebraska leverages federal funds along with a network of partnerships designed to address some the state's most critical and persistent community problems.

### **What is AmeriCorps?**

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for citizens to serve their communities and help local communities meet critical human needs. Similar to the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps involves individuals "getting things done" through providing direct services in their communities. In exchange for one year of service, AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance and an education award to help pay for college or to repay college student loans. AmeriCorps members in Nebraska help support out of school activities and provide homework help; connect refugees with resources, English as a second language classes, and job training; makes college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support; provide direct services to children with autism and their families; and help to reduce recidivism through improving education and employment opportunities for adult and juvenile probationers to name a few.

Since 1994, AmeriCorps programs have tackled some of the America's toughest problems: illiteracy; affordable housing; children's health and education; and domestic violence among others. Measurable results have been achieved through these programs. Americans of all ages and backgrounds provide a year of community service in exchange for a living allowance during their term of service and/or an education award granted upon completion of their term of service.

AmeriCorps\*State is one of many national service programs funded by the Corporation of National and Community Service, a federal agency created under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Under this same legislation, states were required to establish community service commissions to provide a coordinated response to national service programming in the state. As a result, ServeNebraska was established in 1994. The Commission is responsible for funding AmeriCorps programs in the state and for oversight of implementation and operation of these programs.

### **How can I find out more about AmeriCorps?**

Please feel free to check out the national AmeriCorps website: [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)

We also have information on our website: <http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/americorps/americorps.htm>

### **What is ServeNebraska Planning Grants?**

Allows organizations to begin developing their plans to host an AmeriCorps program. Planning grant activities may involve work to establish a new program in Nebraska or replicate successful existing program models in unserved or underserved areas of Nebraska. Organizations use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

**Why should we be interested in this opportunity?**

ServeNebraska is looking for organizations that are interested in sponsoring a minimum of 3 MSY's of AmeriCorps members to provide direct service to the community. We are looking for organizations to address one of the following focus areas: Disaster Services, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, and Veteran and Military Families.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including labor organizations, faith-based and other community organizations that have their 501c3 status; educational institutions (local school districts, intermediate school districts, institutions of higher education); government entities within Nebraska (e.g., cities, counties and state); and partnerships or consortia **who have not received AmeriCorps\*State funds in the past** are eligible to apply for a planning grant. If you have received AmeriCorps VISTA or NCCC funds, you may still be eligible.

**What are the program and grant size requirements?**

Planning grants are limited to a one-time award up to \$25,000 to assist with developing an AmeriCorps program.

Recipients are expected to prepare an application for an operating program for the following year, although there is no guarantee of future funding. Planning grant applicants must not have previously received an AmeriCorps State or National grant.

**Is there a match requirement?**

Yes. The match requirement during the planning grant year is 24% which can consist of cash and/or in-kind. If awarded an AmeriCorps program the following year, the match percentage will not change. AmeriCorps is not a stand-alone program and **does** require community support.

**What is the project period?**

Planning grants begin in September 1, 2016-August 31, 2017.

Sample  
Planning Grant Cover Sheet

Project Title:	Helping Hands
Organization Contact Information:	Nebraska Helps 123 Main Street Omaha, NE 68508
Type of Applicant:	Non-Profit
EIN#:	123456789
DUNS#:	187187187
Contact Person:	John Smith 304-555-1234 <a href="mailto:JSmith@nebhelps.org">JSmith@nebhelps.org</a>
Primary Issue Area:	Healthy Futures
Geographic Area:	Omaha Metro
Federal Funds Requested:	\$15,000.00
In-Kind/Cash Match Requirement:	\$4,737.00 \$2,000.00-Helping Hands International \$2,737.00-In-Kind

## ServeNebraska AmeriCorps Planning Grant Timeline

### Applicant Organization:

This is an outline of the recommended activities for an AmeriCorps planning grant period. Please indicate the target dates when the following items are intended to be addressed. If you are not planning to conduct a particular activity, please put “N/A” in the anticipated completion date column. If an activity is already complete, please write “complete” in the anticipated completion date column. Use the “notes” column to detail any additional information to be shared. The shaded columns are activities that are not a priority during the ten-month proposed planning period, but are activities that would need to be completed, if awarded an operational grant, prior to the AmeriCorps operational grant start date.

Please note the Planning Grant period is slated for November 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016.

Items	Completion Date* (Anticipated)	Notes
<b>I. Program Planning Director Requirements</b>		
Attend RFP Orientation Session		
Attend <u>all</u> ServeNebraska – Program Leader trainings and calls		
Meet with ServeNebraska staff one time a month for check-in,		
progress reporting and training.		
<b>II. Public Awareness and Community Involvement</b>		
<i>Theory of Change Model – Problem, Intervention, Outcome, Evidence</i>		
What are the <i>PROBLEM(s)/NEED(s)</i> you plan to address?		
What is the data that supports the existence of this problem? Specific, recent, local data is best.		
Will your community benefit from the proposed program? How?		
Other		

<b>Community Awareness</b>		
Have you developed a public awareness campaign to educate the community about your program? If so, what is it?		
Items	Completion Date* Anticipated	Notes
Have you developed a brochure or other outreach materials describing your program? If so, please attach them.		
Other		
<b>III. Service Implementation Plan</b>		
<b>Services</b>		
Have you identified the <i>INTERVENTION</i> (activities – what is done, with whom and at what dosage) to be delivered by your AmeriCorps members and/or community volunteers?		
What is the <i>EVIDENCE</i> you have that this <i>INTERVENTION</i> will address the <i>PROBLEM/NEED</i> ? (What evidence do you have that leads you to select the proposed activity/intervention over other possible interventions?)		
Is the <i>PROBLEM/NEED INTERVENTION</i> in one of the CNCS or state priority areas? If so, which one? Describe the relationship.		
Has the program developed or identified an Advisory Committee/Board? Define their mission/goals and their meeting schedule. Please list or attach the members and leadership structure.		
Have you described the AmeriCorps member structure (how many, FT/HT, etc...)? If so, please list or attach.		

Have you defined any role for your program in disaster/Homeland Security?		
Other		
<b>Partners</b>		
Have you identified partners/host service sites? If so, describe your relationship with them.		
If using a site application process, are you planning to use Serve Nebraska's host site application? What are the selection criteria you plan to use? Describe or attach the plans.		
Items	Completion Date* (Anticipated)	Notes
What is your time frame for the structure/program design (12-month, 11-month, academic year 9-month, etc.)? Explain how you will address the 12-month AmeriCorps service year (keeping in mind the grant start date of September 1?)		
Have you established collaborations with local faith-based organizations? If so, describe them.		
Other		
<b>General</b>		
Does the program have plans to participate in National Days of Service? If so, what are they? (Keep in mind that ServeNebraska Week in April and the AmeriCorps Symposium are required		

events for AmeriCorps programs in Nebraska.)		
Other		
<b>IV. AmeriCorps Member Recruitment Plan</b>		
<b>Member Skills</b>		
Have you identified minimum requirements for members in your program? What are they?		
Have you identified desired characteristics for members in your program? What are they?		
Other		
<b>Member Recruitment</b>		
Has a member recruitment plan been developed? If yes, please attach it.		
Do you have a plan to recruit diverse members into your program? If yes, attach it.		
Do you have position descriptions developed for each member role? Please attach position descriptions.		
Have you identified reasonable accommodations that would allow members with disabilities to serve?		
Items	Completion Date* Anticipated	Notes
Have you created a packet of all application materials to distribute to interested individuals? If so, please attach it.		
Is the program registered on the AmeriCorps National Recruitment webpage?		
Other		



<b>Member Selection</b>		
Have you developed a screening/interview process? What does it entail?		
Have you identified how you will make a final decision on selection of members? If so, describe.		
Do you have a Criminal History Background Check policy and process developed? If yes, please attach.		
Have you decided how you will match members with sites? If so, how?		
Have you begun the process of recruitment, interviewing and selection?		
Other		
<b>V. Member Development Plan</b>		
<b>Member Training</b>		
Is there a member orientation that outlines the following?		
• Rights and responsibilities		
• Code of Conduct		
• Prohibited Activities		
• Drug Free Workplace Act		
• Suspension/termination		
• Grievance Procedures		
• Sexual harassment and discrimination		
• National Service		
• Role of ServeNebraska		
Is there a plan for providing training in communication, citizen-ship, disaster preparedness, and Life After AmeriCorps? If		

yes, describe.		
Have you identified specific training needs for your members, related to their service site (child development, construction, financial literacy education, etc.)? What are these needs?		
Have you developed a member training calendar? If yes, attach.		
Other		
<b>Tutoring Programs Only</b>		
Has the program addressed the No Child Left Behind Act/special requirements for recruiting/selecting tutors?		
Have you ensured that your training curriculum meets the requirements for tutoring programs?		
Have you defined tutoring standards? What are they?		
Have you ensured that the supervisors meet the requirements for tutoring programs?		
<b>Member Supervision</b>		
Do you have plans for bringing the members together regularly? If so, what are they?		
Do you have plans for visiting member placement sites? What are they?		
Do you have a procedure developed for when to suspend members (for cause, for serving no hours during a pay period, etc.)		
Have you developed mid- and end-of-term evaluations for members? If so, attach.		
Other		

<b>VI. Formal Partnership Plans</b>		
<b>Host Site Recruitment</b>		
Has the number of Host Sites been determined?		
Has Host Site selection criteria been developed and approved?		
Has there been a plan developed for what will occur if a Host Site backs out?		
<b>Host Sites</b>		
Has the list of responsibilities for site supervisors been developed? If so, attach.		
Is there a plan for determining how many members a host site will receive? Please describe.		
Has the financial support from each site (cash and in-kind match, fee) been determined? If yes, please explain.		
Is there a written host site agreement developed to outline responsibilities/expectations for partner sites? If yes, attach.		
Is there a written plan pertaining to Site Supervisor/Program Director communication expectations?		
Is there a written plan pertaining to Host Site responsibilities and member discipline?		
Is there a training/orientation plan developed for host sites and site supervisors? Please describe.		
Other		
<b>VII. Evaluation</b>		
<b>Performance Measures</b>		
Have you developed performance measures (PM) for your program? What are they?		
Do you have at least one output, one intermediate, and one end outcome PM?		
Do you plan to participate in the National Performance Measures? If so, which one(s)?		

What data collection instruments will you use to measure the impact of your program? Attach copies.		
Do you have a procedure for gathering data from members/partner sites? What is it?		
Other		
<b>Data Collection and Integrity</b>		
needed Do you have systems in place that identify all data points for each performance measure? If not, what is your plan to secure each of the data points needed.		
part Do you have data integrity training planned or developed as of your member orientation?		
Do you have a plan to ensure ongoing data integrity and storage as required by CNCS?		
<b>VIII. Budget</b>		
<b>Budget</b>		
Have you determined what AmeriCorps service gear will be provided to members and the cost of that gear?		
Have you accounted for all staffing related to the AmeriCorps program in your budget (in federal and/or grantee share)?		
Have you developed a budget that adequately accounts for all program activities?		
Have you determined that you are meeting the match required by AmeriCorps grant requirements?		
Does the total federal request fall within allowable maximum per MSY range?		
Are the member(s) living allowance(s) within the allowable range(s)?		
Here are some commonly overlooked costs: Background checks for staff <u>and</u> members, worker's compensation, travel for members to training events, program staff professional		

development, training for site supervisors, health care costs for FT members. Ensure these costs are included, as appropriate, in your budget.		
<b>IX. Sustainability</b>		
<b>Host Sites</b>		
Do you have a plan for non-AmeriCorps (community) volunteer generation?		
If you have a plan, how will volunteers be managed, trained, and tracked?		
Do you have current relationships with funders, such as foundations and corporations? How secure are these relationships?		
Do you have a plan for securing additional resources to increase your match in future grant years?		
Do you have a plan for integrating the AmeriCorps program into your agency's overall mission/vision?		
Five years from now, could the service you plan to provide continue without AmeriCorps resources? If so, how?		
Other		
<b>X. System Manuals and Tracking Instruments</b>		
<b>Systems for Members</b>		
Has a member handbook been developed? If yes, attach.		
Is there a system in place to certify member completion of HS diploma/GED, or their agreement to do so before using the ed award?		
Have you developed a procedure for conducting member background checks? Describe.		
Has a member contract been developed? Does it contain the following required items? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position description</li> <li>• Term type (minimum # hours) &amp; start/end dates</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug Free Workplace policy</li> <li>• Discipline, suspension, and termination policies</li> <li>• Specific terms about release for cause and for compelling personal circumstances</li> <li>• Grievance procedure</li> <li>• Nonduplication/nondisplacement</li> <li>• Background check clause (what will exclude members from service)</li> <li>• Prohibited activities</li> </ul>		
<p>Are procedures in place to obtain necessary documentation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background checks</li> <li>• Health care enrollment/waiver</li> <li>• Child care benefits</li> <li>• Publicity release</li> <li>• Proof of meeting citizenship requirements</li> <li>• Tax forms</li> </ul>		
<b>Program Systems</b>		
Is there a position description developed for program staff? If so, attach.		
Have you developed a Program Design and Member Enrollment chart? Attach.		
Have you developed forms for monitoring site visits? Attach.		
Other		
<b>Systems for Financial Management</b>		
<p>Has a system been developed for monitoring and tracking the financial aspects of the program? Systems should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an individual that can bind your organization by signature to programmatic and financial requirements set out in ServeNebraska's subgrant award agreement. This individual will also be required to sign the Final Federal Financial Report (FFR) submitted at the time of closing out the grant.</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate AmeriCorps records by grant year</li> <li>• Document actual expenses/match, not budgeted amounts</li> <li>• Comparison of expenditures with budgeted amounts for each Federal award</li> <li>• Ensure that unemployment is not paid for members</li> <li>• Withhold income tax and FICA from member living allowance</li> <li>• Cover all members in worker's compensation plan</li> <li>• Distribute living allowance in even amounts and not on an hourly basis.</li> <li>• Time and effort procedure is developed for program staff to account for 100% of time spent on grant <u>and</u> non-grant activities.</li> <li>• Procurement policies and procedures reflect full and open competition to ensure contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage. (200.318)</li> <li>• Written procurement/financial policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Have procedures in place for protection of Personal Identifiable Information (PII).</li> </ul>		
Other		





